

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING
MARCELLA ROSE RYAN LEBEAU

HON. DUSTY JOHNSON

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life of Marcella Rose Ryan LeBeau, Wígmúnke Wašté Wíŋ (Pretty Rainbow Woman), of the Cheyenne River Oǎhenuŋpa (Two Kettle) Lakota Nation. Marcella LeBeau, a decorated veteran of the Second World War and a constant advocate for Indian country, passed away on November 22, 2021 at the age of 102.

Mrs. LeBeau was born in 1919, in Promise, South Dakota, and was a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. After the death of her mother and grandmother, LeBeau attended an Indian boarding school where she faced much discrimination and was barred from speaking the Lakota language.

When LeBeau was 23 she enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps and served in England, France, and Belgium during the Second World War. As a nurse with the 76th General Hospital Unit, she treated frontline soldiers during the Invasion of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. According to Mrs. LeBeau, "it was the greatest honor of my life to serve."

After the war, LeBeau continued to serve her community as an R.N. for 31 years until she retired as the director of nursing for the Indian Health Service on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. Marcella also served on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Council from 1991 to 1995 where she succeeded in leading a campaign to ban smoking in tribal buildings.

Mrs. LeBeau remained active in organizations and advocacy for Native Americans' rights and health and was a co-founding member of the North American Indian Women's Association.

Mrs. LeBeau married Gilbert LeBeau in 1947 and together they had eight children, 29 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

LeBeau has been recognized and honored in many ways throughout her life. In 2004, LeBeau was awarded the French Legion of Honor for her service in World War II, which is the highest honor given by the French government. She was inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame in 2006 and awarded the Women in History Award from the Spirit of the Prairie Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 2016. LeBeau also received an honorary doctorate degree in Public Service from South Dakota State University in 2018. In 2020, the National Congress of the American Indian recognized her with a leadership award, and USA Today named her as one of the most influential women of the century. On November 6, 2021, she was inducted into the National Native American Hall of Fame.

Madam Speaker, Marcella LeBeau dedicated her life to the service of her family, her tribe, and her nation. I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring her contributions to our nation and the people of South Dakota. I extend my deepest condolences to the LeBeau family, Marcella will be deeply missed.

HONORING TERRELL CHANDLER

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Ms. SLOTKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of our essential partners in supporting our Afghan allies as they await vetting and processing in Albania, Ms. Terrell Chandler.

Ms. Chandler is the Director of Field Operations for Spirit of America, a non-profit organization whose mission is to support our diplomats and our men and women in uniform abroad. Through 1,442 projects in 91 countries, Spirit of America delivers on the promise of a free and better life for countless individuals who live where Americans are deployed.

Before joining Spirit of America, Ms. Chandler spent over a decade as a Navy reservist supporting Marines, Green Berets, and other Navy units. In 2014, she served a combat tour in Afghanistan where she supported Navy SEALs and Army Special Forces as a member of a Cultural Support Team. While deployed, she developed a first-of-its-kind curriculum and training for a military exchange between U.S. and female partner forces in Southwest Asia, all while working to deliver humanitarian aid that supported the local population. This mission brought her in contact with Spirit of America and after exiting the service, she joined the ranks of other veterans who work at the non-profit.

In her role, she's been instrumental in sourcing donations for more than 100 Afghans who were evacuated to Albania. Their harrowing journey out of danger may be over, but they still need support while they are vetted to come to the United States—a process that could take years. Ms. Chandler knows how to bring resources and efficiency to a mission and we couldn't ask for a better partner as we coordinate the short, medium and long-term plan for our allies.

Ms. Chandler lives and breathes Mark Twain's words, "broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things can't be acquired by vegetating in one corner of the earth all one's life." Wherever her service has taken her, she has taken the time to give back.

Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Ms. Terrell Chandler for her willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty in our effort to evacuate Afghan allies from Kabul and support them in their new life. For her commitment to providing for them while they await processing and resettlement, and for her resourcefulness and grit to solve any challenge, come what may, I submit these words so they stand as a tribute to her dedicated service when the moment called for it most.

HONORING THE LIFE OF
CHARLENE LEONARD

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Charlene Mat-

thews Leonard, who passed away on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, after a brief illness. She was born on March 3, 1933, in Mexia, Texas, to parents Z.S. and Jewel Matthews.

Charlene and her family moved to Beaumont, Texas, in the early 1940s, where she graduated from Beaumont High School in 1951. During her formative years, Charlene encountered and befriended Mrs. Eloise Milam, founder of the Melody Maids. This singing group of young women performed with the goal of expressing their gratitude to the men and women serving in uniform during WWII. Without hesitation, Charlene quickly joined the group. Traveling for 30 years as "Ambassadors of Goodwill," the Melody Maids brought joy to American military bases around the world.

Charlene met the love of her life, William S. "Bud" Leonard, while attending Lamar College, which is now known as Lamar University. They shared a wonderful marriage for nearly 67 years until Bud's death in 2020. During their marriage, the couple was blessed with two children. Their eldest daughter, Joni Marie, was born on March 14, 1956, in San Diego, California, while Bud was stationed there in the Navy. Joni was born with severe mental and physical disabilities, but that did not prevent her from living a full life at home with her parents for the last 65 years. Their son Will, equally the apple of the couple's eyes, was born in Beaumont two years later in 1958.

With a song always in her heart, Charlene could be heard faithfully sharing her love of music with the church choir at Calder Baptist Church, the Interfaith Choral Society, Beaumont Junior League Follies, and Lullaby of Broadway which supported the music program at Lamar University. She routinely attended her alma mater's functions, cheering on the Cardinals at athletic events, while her husband Bud served as Vice Chancellor for Development. Those attending productions at the Julie Rogers Theatre in Beaumont regularly found Charlene in the Melody Maids' Museum sharing the countless mementos and scrapbooks from their decades of travel that are housed there.

Charlene was strong in her faith and her love for her husband Bud, her son Will and his wife, Michelle, of Beaumont, and her twin granddaughters, Anne Kellam Leonard of Los Angeles, California, and Claire Matthews Leonard of Birmingham, Alabama. Similarly, one cannot say enough about Charlene's devotion and selfless adoration for her special daughter, Joni. She never relented in her resolve to personally care for Joni as long as she could and never complained or regretted one moment of that decision.

Madam Speaker, until he passed away in 2020, Bud and Charlene Leonard were an inseparable pair, a Beaumont institution that defined community service and a zest for life. Charlene genuinely loved and cared for people and valued making new friends to add to the many cherished old friends she was dedicated to her whole life. I am privileged to have known her.